No doctor could hear
what I heard.
The voices wanted me
to free my son
from his breed
and complexion.
"Too dark to live!"
They implored.
I should have kept him
in my womb.
I don't hear his screams
when I close the refrigerator.

The evening the voices demanded,
"Deliver him—now!"
I withdrew the meat knife.
I called him to the kitchen
and beckoned him into my arms
to kiss me.
I slit his throat
as he tip-toed up
to put his lips to mine.
I licked his sweet blood
from my hands and blade.
I carved his heart from his chest
and hid it from a thief named God.

Nothing about this alarmed me.
No, nothing appeared unusual,
Your Honor.

FOR MY OWN PROTECTION

I want to start
an organization
to save my life.
If whales, snails,
dogs, cats,
Chrysler, and Nixon
can be saved,
the lives of Black men
are priceless
and can be saved.
We should be able
to save each other.
I don't want to wait
for the Heritage Foundation
to release a study
stating Black men
are almost extinct.
I don't want to be
the living dead
pacified with drugs
and sex.

If a human chain
can be formed
around missile sites,
then surely Black men
can form human chains
around Anacostia, Harlem,